

§ 153A-344. Planning board; zoning plan; certification to board of commissioners.

(a) To initially exercise the powers conferred by this Part, a county shall create or designate a planning board under the provisions of this Article or of a local act. The planning board shall prepare or shall review and comment upon a proposed zoning ordinance, including both the full text of such ordinance and maps showing proposed district boundaries. The planning board may hold public hearings in the course of preparing the ordinance. Upon completion, the planning board shall make a written recommendation regarding adoption of the ordinance to the board of commissioners. The board of commissioners shall not hold the public hearing required by G.S. 153A-323 or take action until it has received a recommendation regarding the ordinance from the planning board. Following its required public hearing, the board of commissioners may refer the ordinance back to the planning board for any further recommendations that the board may wish to make prior to final action by the board in adopting, modifying and adopting, or rejecting the ordinance.

Subsequent to initial adoption of a zoning ordinance, all proposed amendments to the zoning ordinance or zoning map shall be submitted to the planning board for review and comment. If no written report is received from the planning board within 30 days of referral of the amendment to that board, the board of county commissioners may proceed in its consideration of the amendment without the planning board report. The board of commissioners is not bound by the recommendations, if any, of the planning board.

(b) Amendments in zoning ordinances shall not be applicable or enforceable without consent of the owner with regard to buildings and uses for which either (i) building permits have been issued pursuant to G.S. 153A-357 prior to the enactment of the ordinance making the change or changes so long as the permits remain valid and unexpired pursuant to G.S. 153A-358 and unrevoked pursuant to G.S. 153A-362 or (ii) a vested right has been established pursuant to G.S. 153A-344.1 and such vested right remains valid and unexpired pursuant to G.S. 153A-344.1.

(b1) Amendments in zoning ordinances, subdivision ordinances, and unified development ordinances shall not be applicable or enforceable without the written consent of the owner with regard to a multi-phased development as defined in G.S. 153A-344.1(b)(7). A multi-phased development shall be vested for the entire development with the zoning ordinances, subdivision ordinances, and unified development ordinances then in place at the time a site plan approval is granted for the initial phase of the multi-phased development. A right which has been vested as provided for in this subsection shall remain vested for a period of seven years from the time a site plan approval is granted for the initial phase of the multi-phased development. (1959, c. 1006, s. 1; 1965, c. 194, s. 3; 1973, c. 822, s. 1; 1979, c. 611, s. 3; 1985, c. 540, s. 1; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 996, s. 5; 2005-418, s. 7(b); 2016-111, s. 3.)